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Selected Speeches and News Releases

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USDA RENEWS FLUE-CURED TOBACCO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, March 2—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has renewed the Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee for two years.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee provides information essential to the orderly marketing of flue-cured tobacco.

“This information is needed to equitably assign inspectors to all designated markets for flue-cured tobacco,” said Haley. “Under provisions of the Tobacco Inspection Act, tobacco must be officially inspected to be sold at auction in designated markets.”

The committee also recommends opening dates and selling schedules for the flue-cured regions from Virginia to Florida. AMS oversees the operation of the committee for the secretary.

The 39-member advisory committee is composed of 21 producers, 10 warehouse operators and eight buyers.

The committee, authorized by the Federal Advisory Act, reports to the AMS tobacco division director. It has been renewed every two years since its establishment in 1974.

USDA will announce the names of the committee members and their alternates once they have been selected.

Jacque Lee (202) 447-6179

#

SOYBEAN PLANTINGS TO BE ALLOWED ON PROGRAM PERMITTED ACREAGE

WASHINGTON, March 2—Producers who sought authorization to plant soybeans on program permitted acreage under the 1990 commodity price support and production adjustment programs, will be allowed to plant their requested acreage, said Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Under the 0/25 provisions of the 1990 programs, producers could request up to 25 percent of their permitted acreage for 1990 wheat, feed grains, upland cotton, extra long staple cotton and rice be planted to soybeans, sunflowers and safflowers.

Use of this planting option will not change farm acreage bases or individual crop acreage bases and the acreage will be considered as planted to the program crop for crop history purposes. However, no program benefits, other than soybean price support loans and purchases, will be available for the production from the acreage planted under this option.

The signup period to request soybean planting authorization was Jan. 16 through Feb. 16. Since sunflowers and safflowers may also be planted on Conserving Use acreage under the 1990 programs, as approved nonprogram crops, signup under the 0/25 option was not required.

When the 0/25 signup was announced on Dec. 29, 1989, CCC said a decision would be made to accept, reduce or eliminate all or a portion of the permitted acreage that may be planted to soybeans to ensure that the price for soybeans would not be less than \$4.98 per bushel. After a review of anticipated additional soybean plantings, it was determined that this action will not result in the average 1990-crop soybean price falling below this amount.

The following table shows, by state-by-state intended plantings for soybeans, sunflowers and safflowers as indicated in the signup: State-by-state acreage enrollment figures for the three commodities are:

Chart on next page.

	Soybean	Sunflower	Safflower	Total
Alabama	2,986.5	0.0	0.0	2,986.5
Alaska	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arizona	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arkansas	28,256.1	0.0	0.0	28,256.1
California	0.0	63.6	74.8	138.4
Colorado	60.3	379.6	0.0	439.9
Connecticut	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Delaware	1,964.9	0.0	0.0	1,964.9
Florida	749.9	0.0	0.0	749.9
Georgia	11,038.0	154.4	0.0	11,192.4
Idaho	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Illinois	293,155.0	24.6	0.0	293,179.6
Indiana	121,722.4	0.0	0.0	121,722.4
Iowa	261,617.0	65.3	0.0	261,682.3
Kansas	229,028.7	1,071.2	0.0	230,099.9
Kentucky	26,744.6	6.0	0.0	26,750.6
Louisiana	14,798.5	0.0	0.0	14,798.5
Maine	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Maryland	19,860.6	41.1	0.0	19,901.7
Massachusetts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Michigan	43,912.1	0.0	0.0	43,912.1
Minnesota	169,576.8	1,623.0	0.0	171,199.8
Mississippi	13,793.9	147.6	0.0	13,941.5
Missouri	72,008.9	0.0	0.0	72,008.9
Montana	0.0	0.0	5.3	5.3
Nebraska	255,178.8	296.3	0.0	255,475.1
Nevada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Jersey	1,669.3	0.0	0.0	1,669.3
New Mexico	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New York	2,995.8	11.6	0.0	3,007.4
North Carolina	14,458.4	3.0	0.0	14,461.4
North Dakota	53,351.3	4,872.6	0.0	58,223.9
Ohio	85,139.8	6.0	6.0	85,151.8
Oklahoma	4,460.2	0.0	0.0	4,460.2
Oregon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pennsylvania	8,618.1	25.1	1.0	8,644.2
Rhode Island	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Carolina	5,518.9	10.8	0.0	5,529.7
South Dakota	116,123.2	957.1	0.0	117,080.3

Tennessee	7,672.1	0.0	0.0	7,672.1
Texas	12,304.4	402.5	0.0	12,706.9
Utah	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vermont	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Virginia	13,899.2	0.0	0.0	13,899.2
Washington	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Virginia	1,916.1	0.0	0.0	1,916.1
Wisconsin	25,567.2	0.0	0.0	25,567.2
Wyoming	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	1,920,147.0	10,161.4	87.1	1,930,395.5

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#

TENNESSEE FIRM FINED FOR MEAT INSPECTION VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON, March 2—A Federal court has fined Chadwell Meats, Inc., of Maynardville, Tenn., \$2,500 for transporting and selling misbranded beef products to two mental health institutions, a school for the deaf, and a penitentiary operated by the state of Tennessee.

On Feb. 9, the company was charged with five misdemeanor counts of offering for sale, selling and transporting ground beef that contained soybean additives and water. The company entered a guilty plea to each count, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The charges were brought against the company after an FSIS inspector observed products being mislabeled in the plant. In addition, laboratory samples taken at the various institutions confirmed that the products were mislabeled.

Federal regulations prohibit the addition of water, extenders or binders in products labeled as "ground beef."

FSIS ensures that meat products sold within the United States or exported are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

SCIENTISTS STUDY FOREST DECLINE

WASHINGTON—Working under a 1990 deadline set by Congress, environmental scientists throughout the United States are finishing up a major research effort to pinpoint the causes of forest declines.

Dr. Gerard D. Hertel, a scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, heads the joint acid precipitation forestry research program of USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency. "We're excited about the progress being made," Hertel said. "The research has produced major advances in our understanding of how pollutants affect forests."

In 1980, Congress gave the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program (NAPAP) until 1990 to come up with a final assessment to help officials make recommendations for standards for air quality. The Forest Service and EPA have coordinated the federal government's forestry research effort in support of NAPAP, working with the National Council of the Paper Industry for Air and Stream Improvement. The program has supported hundreds of university, private, and government researchers.

Forest declines have been reported in several areas of the United States where air pollution is suspected to have played a role. Hertel says research under NAPAP has begun to document the effect of acid deposition and ozone on forests, with special emphasis on high-elevation spruce and fir forests, southern pines, eastern hardwoods and western conifers, including the red spruce forests on the mountains of the East, sugar maples in the Northeast, commercial pines in the Southeast, and ponderosa and Jeffrey pines in southern California.

The results indicate that air pollutants are one of many factors that can adversely affect forests, according to Hertel.

Research shows that in the Northeast many red spruce have died at high elevations since the early 1960's; acid precipitation has weakened the trees, because acid clouds have made them more susceptible to winter injury. In the southern Appalachians, findings indicate that high levels of aluminum, released by acid precipitation, may have reduced growth rates of red spruce by preventing the trees' uptake of important nutrients.

For southern pine forests, computer models indicate that current levels of acid deposition could cause harmful changes in soil chemistry within 50 years. Research findings also indicate that ozone has reduced the growth and accelerated needle loss in pine seedlings of certain families. Ozone, along with other stresses, may have played a role in the reduced

growth of pines in natural stands in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, says Hertel.

Results indicate that Eastern hardwoods in general are doing well. No negative effects of acid rain on seedling growth have been found, but evidence is accumulating that sulfate deposition from acid rain is affecting soil chemistry, so far without effect on forest productivity.

For sugar maples, a joint U.S.-Canadian project has found no effects to date resulting from air pollution.

In the West, experiments have shown ponderosa pine is the species most sensitive to ozone exposure. In the San Bernardino Mountains adjacent to the Los Angeles basin in California, ozone has caused visible damage to ponderosa pine, and has reduced their growth to such an extent that they are susceptible to attacks by bark beetles and root pathogens. Research findings show ponderosa pine has not been affected by acid rain.

Hertel says that even now as the final NAPAP assessment is being put together, Congress is using the results of several studies in addressing the air quality issue. The Forest Service is also using the results in establishing guidelines to protect some wilderness areas, according to Hertel.

After the NAPAP research is complete, the Forest Service will continue to conduct research on how trees are affected by atmospheric pollution and will add research on how climate change affects forests, according to Hertel.

“The health of our forests is important to preserving the beauty of our nation, the quality of our water supplies, and the availability of wood products,” said Hertel.

Problems in Forest Research

According to Dr. Gerard D. Hertel, head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's and the Environmental Protection Agency's joint Forest Response Program of forest research on acid precipitation, scientists studying the effects of acid deposition and associated air pollutants on our nation's forests face a multitude of problems. Hertel says trees respond to a wide range of stresses throughout their life cycles.

The direct influences include extremes of temperature, humidity, wind, nutrient availability, soil chemistry, pathogens, insects, fire, and various

types of air pollution which can result in the typical patterns of growth and decline in forests.

Trees can live for hundreds of years or even longer, and the effects of these stresses accumulate over time. Therefore, research to evaluate the possible effects of acid deposition, in combination with many other stresses, requires long-term studies over broad geographic areas.

According to Hertel, scientists usually consider two mechanisms of potential damage to forests from acid deposition: direct impacts through the the trees' leaves and needles, and indirect impacts due to alterations in soil chemistry.

Direct impacts, according to Hertel, are most likely at high elevations where red spruce forests in the Northeast are exposed to severe weather stresses, as well as frequent exposure to cloud water containing acids at higher concentrations than observed in rain and higher exposures to ozone than lowland forests.

Hertel says indirect impacts due to soil chemical changes are of concern because such processes may be cumulative over large areas, with impacts on forest growth becoming apparent only after decades. Soils at high elevations are often thin and poorly buffered, and these forests may be the first to experience soil-related effects. According to Hertel, a tenth to nearly a third of low-elevation southern soils may show a soil chemistry response to acid deposition within 50 years.

Richard Lindeborg (202) 447-3760

#

USDA ISSUES NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFYING YOUNG CALVES

WASHINGTON, March 2—Effective May 31, producers of young calves and subsequent owners or handlers—who wish to certify that their calves are free of violative drug residues—will be required to use standard language on their certificates. Previously, only animal producers prepared certificates, and specific wording was not required.

“Having these certificates will be helpful in tracing back the source of violative calves,” said Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service.

“This strengthening of the certification program should discourage illegal drug use in calves.

To control the problem of drug residues in “bob” calves (up to three weeks of age or weighing 150 pounds or less), since 1985 USDA inspectors have been testing such carcasses at the plant and condemning those found contaminated with drug residues. Inspectors test uncertified calves more intensely than certified ones.

Under the new rule, the certificates will have to state that the calf was given no medications or, if so, that the prescribed withdrawal period has passed. The certificates also must include the statement that willful falsification may result in “a fine of up to \$250,000 for an individual or up to \$500,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than 5 years or both.”

These rule changes were proposed on Dec. 27, 1988, and five comments were received. While all supported the intent of the program, four had additional comments. For example, three were concerned that the additional paperwork required might discourage participation.

“Although we recognize that the requirements would create paperwork for truckers, market operators and agents,” Crawford said, “we have determined that requiring certifications from each custodian provides the most effective and least disruptive means of tracing back a residue problem to its source.”

In response to a comment asking who would supply the certificates, Crawford said that the person certifying the calf, not FSIS, must prepare the statement. USDA, however, will make the wording widely available to persons handling calves, he said.

This new regulation is scheduled to be published in today’s Federal Register.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

USDA RESOLVES THREE ANIMAL WELFARE VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON, March 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently resolved three violations of standards under the Animal Welfare Act, requiring humane care and treatment of animals.

James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said these cases were prosecuted under administrative procedures of USDA. Details are:

—Lloyd A. Good, owner of Sugarloaf Lodge, located on Sugarloaf Key in Florida, was ordered by an administrative law judge to pay a \$2,500 fine and abide by a cease-and-desist order against further violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

APHIS charged Good with keeping a dolphin, named "Sugar," without testing the water in the dolphin's pool for coliform bacteria. The judge held a hearing on the matter on Jan. 13, 1989, in Key West. On Oct. 30, 1989 he ruled that Good violated the act by not testing the water as required. He affirmed APHIS jurisdiction over the dolphin even though Good doesn't directly charge admission for viewing "Sugar" because Good derives income from visitors who buy gas, food, and lodging from the facility and use the airstrip he operates.

Good appealed the decision to the USDA's judicial officer on Dec. 7, 1989. A final ruling on the matter is still pending.

James W. and Marie Hickey, owners of S & S Farms of Lebanon, Ore., were ordered to cease and desist from violating the Animal Welfare Act and to comply with a suspension of their license by not dealing in animals for the next 25 years. That suspension, affirmed in a decision by the Circuit Court of Appeals in Portland, Ore, on June 26, 1989, also involved a fine of \$40,000. In the current ruling, an administrative law judge specifically ordered James and Marie Hickey not to own any pets other than two dogs, which may not be bred.

James Joseph Hickey and his wife Shannon Hansen, owners of S & H Supply, with operations in Albany and Lebanon, Ore., were assessed a joint penalty of \$10,000 and ordered to cease and desist from further violations of the act. James Joseph Hickey's license to operate as a dealer has been suspend for one year, according to a judge's ruling. Shannon Hanson's application for a dealer's license was denied and will not be reconsidered until her husband's suspension has been lifted. The judge based his finding on an administrative hearing held Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, 1989, in Portland, Ore.

USDA brought the most recent charges against the two Hickey families for dealings in animals between July and October of 1988. The Hickeys allegedly misidentified their dogs and cats, kept inadequate records on purchases and sales, housed animals in enclosures that were poorly ventilated and lighted and not structurally sound or maintained in good repair. Inspectors said feeding and watering pans were not clean and animals were housed in incompatible groups. The Hickeys also did not provide adequate veterinary care to a sick Doberman and repeatedly interfered with APHIS inspectors trying to inspect their facilities and business records.

Robert and Peggy Reichert, owners of Thompson Valley Wildlife Park, Loveland, Colo., were ordered to cease and desist from violating the act, to pay a fine of \$2,500, and to close their park to visitors between June 1 and July 31, during which time their exhibitor's license will be suspended. The judge specifically ordered the Reicherts to post signs at their facility to inform potential visitors of the reasons why the park is closed.

USDA charged the park and its owners with repeated violations of the act. The complaint specified that drainage at the park was inadequate, shelter and housing for animals were substandard, the area was not kept clean and cleared of trash and feed and water dishes were unsanitary. Inspectors also found that waste disposal and pest control were inadequate, incompatible animals were not housed separately, sick animals did not receive adequate veterinary care and not enough employees were on hand to properly care for the animals.

The Animal Welfare Act specifies care and treatment that must be provided to certain animals, covering housing, handling, sanitation, food, water, transportation, veterinary care and protection against extremes of weather and temperature. The first provisions of this law were enacted in 1966; it now covers animals that are sold as pets at the wholesale level or are used for biomedical research or for exhibition in shows, parks and circuses.

Dealers, breeders, brokers, transportation companies, exhibitors and research facilities must be licensed or registered. APHIS inspectors make periodic, unannounced visits to evaluate compliance. USDA files a formal complaint against violators only if earlier efforts to secure compliance are unsuccessful. Failure to respond to such a complaint can result in a default decision, in which a judge sets specific penalties.

If a response is received, the case may be settled under administrative law through a “consent decision” that specifies judicial orders and penalties to be imposed by an administrative law judge on the basis of a previous agreement by the parties.

If the case is not settled, the judge holds a hearing and issues a decision. Either party may appeal this decision to the USDA’s judicial officer. The respondent alone may appeal an adverse decision by the judicial officer to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Amichai Heppner (301) 436-7799

#

USDA AMENDS REGULATIONS ON MANGO PEST CONTROL TREATMENT

WASHINGTON, March 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has amended its regulations to allow a hot-water-dip treatment for several varieties of mangoes from certain areas where the Mediterranean and other fruit flies exist.

According to James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “This ruling will provide an approved treatment for some varieties of mangoes and for mangoes from certain parts of the West Indies, Central America and Mexico. In 1987, ethylene di-bromide (EDB) fumigation was discontinued as a treatment for mangoes shipped into the United States. Using the hot-water-dip treatment, growers from these areas can resume exporting their product to the United States.”

Also, this treatment allows mangoes from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to be shipped once again to other areas of the United States, Glosser said.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

#

NORTH CAROLINA FIRM RECALLS MICROWAVE SOUP FROM FIVE STATES

WASHINGTON, March 5—Campbell Soup Company, a Maxton, N.C., foodprocessing firm, is voluntarily recalling 24,000 packages of its “Microwave Chunky Beef Soup” because some of the soup was not heat-processed. The suspect product has the potential of causing serious illness if eaten, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture official.

The microwave soup was distributed to retail stores in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Some of the soup was also distributed to the military.

The soup is packaged in paper cartons, each containing one 9-1/2 ounce microwaveable plastic bowl with a metallized sealed lid. The suspect product can be identified by a three-line code stamped on the side panel of the package. Only packages with the code “Dec90, Est4R, CO9J” are being recalled. No other production codes of the soup or other foods produced by the company are affected by the recall.

“Although no illnesses have been reported, we strongly urge consumers to avoid opening or tasting the product,” said Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The problem was reported to USDA by Campbell Soup after company officials discovered that part of one day’s production was not sterile and could allow the growth of organisms that cause illness, if those organisms were present.

Consumers with questions about the recall may phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The hotline can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday. Callers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area may call 447-3333. Both phone numbers provide access to a telecommunications device for the deaf.

FSIS inspects all meat and poultry sold in interstate commerce to ensure that it is safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

USDA ANNOUNCES 1990-CROP FLUE-CURED TOBACCO ASSESSMENT

WASHINGTON, March 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today an assessment of 2 cents per pound will be required for the 1990 crop of flue-cured tobacco.

Funds in the No-Net-Cost tobacco account ensure that the price support program for flue-cured tobacco will be operated at no net cost to taxpayers, as required by the No-Net-Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982.

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation consulted with the Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation, the producer-owned association that provides price support for flue-cured tobacco, before reaching a final determination. The assessment of 2 cents per pound will be shared equally between producers and purchasers of the 1990 crop.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206.

#

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP EARLY ALERT FOR HARMFUL FOOD BACTERIA

WASHINGTON, Mar. 5—A new early warning system can help nip bacterial growth that causes food poisoning.

U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have developed a computer program that estimates the growth of harmful bacteria in foods. Usually, a food company needs to conduct numerous tests to determine this pathogen growth when developing new or improved foods, said microbiologist Robert L. Buchanan of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Buchanan said the computer program could cut by 75 percent the number of tests now done by the food industry. This analysis will help companies zero in on what influences bacterial growth, such as acidity or salt.

He said the program is available to the food processing industry. At least one meat and poultry company is using the program to assist in its control of harmful bacteria.

The program currently can estimate growth patterns of Salmonella and Listeria—two food poisoning bacteria that can be found in meat and dairy

products, he said. It took Buchanan two years and more than 700 experiments to develop growth curves for *Listeria*. The *Salmonella* growth curves are based on experiments conducted by a group of scientists headed by T.A. Roberts of the Agriculture Forestry Research Center in Reading, England.

“Essentially we’ve done the experiments for food companies,” said Buchanan at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia. “The data we have collected helped establish the growth curves.”

Experiments are underway at the Microbial Food Safety Research Unit, headed by Buchanan, to expand the program’s uses to include other pathogens like *Shigella*, *Aeromonas* and *Staphylococcus*. He said data on these additional bacteria should be included in the program within a year.

To predict the growth of various harmful bacteria, the program requires five key pieces of information. These include storage temperature, acidity, sodium chloride, atmosphere and sodium nitrite concentration which all interact to control a microorganism’s growth. Levels of these five factors must be supplied before the program can predict a pathogen’s growth rate, Buchanan added.

The food industry knows the levels of each factor needed to limit pathogen growth in foods already approved by USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service or the Food and Drug Administration. But, if the industry develops new foods or refines existing foods, the experiments must be done to arrive at the proper level needed for each factor so pathogen growth will be held down.

For example, a food company could use the new program to develop a low salt frankfurter. A desired level of salt would be entered into the program. A combination of salt and other factors dictating pathogen growth would provide a mathematical equation that estimates the growth rate, Buchanan said.

“You could decrease salt, say by 1.5 percent, and find the pathogen growth rate without having to do all of the experiments,” he said.

Robert L. Buchanan, (215) 233-6620

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PROPOSED CHANGES IN EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK FEED PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, March 6—Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced proposed changes in the administration of the Emergency Livestock Feed Program to make it easier to use by livestock owners and easier to administer by county offices of the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The proposed changes are:

—Feed needs for eligible livestock will be based on net energy requirements for weight class and type, instead of the present use of daily allowances for animal units.

—The extent of a livestock owner's eligibility for assistance will be expressed in dollars, rather than pounds of feed grain equivalent. Production losses and feed on hand will be converted to dollar values.

—A percentage of the assistance for which a producer is eligible will be made available as an advance payment to assist producers in making purchases of needed feed. The producer will then be entitled to receive one additional payment during the feeding period, plus a final settlement at the end of the feeding period. This differs from the current program where the producer must furnish receipts for purchase of eligible feed before getting any cost-share payment.

Bjerke said there is no change in the basic requirements that a substantial loss in feed production must have occurred in an area to authorize implementing the program or that individual owners must have sufficient substantial loss of production to be eligible for assistance.

A proposed rule describing the changes will be published in the March 6 Federal Register.

Comments on the proposed rule may be submitted by March 27 to Jerry W. Newcomb, Director, Emergency Operations and Livestock Programs Division, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, March 6—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 9.41 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 8.46 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 8.35 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.70 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$5.81 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$5.29 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$5.10 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made March 13 at 3 p.m. EST, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

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USDA ANNOUNCES 1990 ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS AND PRICE SUPPORT LEVELS FOR SIX KINDS OF TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, March 6—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced acreage allotments and price support levels for six kinds of tobacco for the 1990 marketing year. It also announced marketing quotas for the next three marketing years for cigar filler and binder tobacco, and a poundage quota for dark air-cured tobacco. The 1990 allotments and support levels are included in the following table for comparison:

Kind of Tobacco	1989 Acreage	1990	1990 Poundage (mil. lb.)	1989 Support Level (\$ per lb.)	1990
Virginia fire-cured (type 21)	4,838	4,315		\$1.191	\$1.262
Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured (types 22-23)	14,319	15,071		1.226	1.297
Dark air-cured (types 35-36)	4,392	4,361	8.8	1.044	1.107
Virginia sun-cured (type 37)	401	285		1.052	1.115
Cigar filler and binder (types 42-44 and 53-55)	11,095	11,953		.909	.962
Cigar filler (type 46)	0	0		Not Applicable	

The levels for 1990 for all six kinds are about 6 percent higher than the 1989-crop price support levels. USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation outlays for 1990 crop year loans to producer associations will be subject to a reduction of 1.4 percent under the deficit reduction sequester order.

The cooperative marketing associations, through which price support is made available to eligible producers, are authorized to request a reduction in the price support level to improve the marketability of the tobacco.

CCC will establish individual grade loan rates before the marketing season begins.

Except for farms on which producers in recent years have planted or received planted credit of less than 75 percent of the farm's acreage allotment, Virginia fire-cured, dark air-cured and sun-cured allotments will remain unchanged from 1989; Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured allotments will increase by 5 percent from 1989; and the cigar filler and binder allotments (types 42-44; 53-55) will increase 15 percent from 1989. Cigar filler (type 46) allotments will remain at zero due to the oversupply of type 46 tobacco.

USDA will hold two referenda March 26-30: producers of cigar filler and binder tobacco will determine if they approve quotas for the marketing years 1990, 1991 and 1992 and producers of dark air-cured tobacco will vote on approving marketing quotas on a poundage basis.

If more than one-third of the cigar tobacco producers who vote oppose quotas, marketing quotas will not be in effect for the 1990 marketing year.

If more than one-half of the dark air-cured producers disapprove of quotas on a poundage basis, acreage allotments will be in effect for the 1990 marketing year.

Quotas were in effect for the 1987-89 crops of cigar filler and binder tobacco. Quotas were approved by a 76 percent majority.

Notices of the 1990 allotments for individual farms will be mailed to producers by county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees.

The committees will also mail referendum ballots to all known eligible producers. Producers who do not receive a ballot may obtain one from their county ASCS office.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206.

#

ELIGIBLE 1989 CORN AND SORGHUM PRODUCERS DUE FARM PROGRAM PAYMENTS

WASHINGTON, March 6—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation this month will make about \$1.080 billion in deficiency and 0/92 payments in cash to eligible producers of 1989-crop corn and sorghum.

Most corn producers requested advance deficiency payments and were paid about \$2.6 billion at signup. "Corn producers will receive about \$780 million in deficiency payments and \$145 million in 0/92 payments," said John Stevenson, acting executive vice president of CCC.

Sorghum producers will receive about \$120 million in deficiency payments and \$35 million in 0/92 payments. "Sorghum producers who requested advance deficiency payments during the 1989 feed grain program signup have already received payments of about \$250 million," Stevenson said.

Deficiency payment rates are the difference between the established target price for the commodity and the higher of the five-month average market price or the basic price support rate for the commodity. Corn and sorghum prices for the first five months of the 1989 marketing year exceeded the basic price support rates of \$2.06 per bushel and \$1.96 per bushel for corn and sorghum, respectively.

Deficiency payments are, therefore, required to be made under the 1989 corn and sorghum programs because the national weighted average

market price received by producers during the first five months of the marketing year (September through January) were below the target price levels.

The following table shows payments corn and sorghum producers will receive:

	Corn	Sorghum
	(\$/bu)	
A. Target Price	\$2.84	\$2.70
B. Basic Price Support Level	\$2.06	\$1.96
C. Five-Month Market Price	\$2.26	\$2.04
D. Five-Month Final Deficiency		
Payment Rate [A minus C]	.58	.66
E. Advance Payment Rate	0.445	0.45

Producers who did not request advance deficiency payments will receive \$0.58 per bushel in corn payments and \$0.66 per bushel in sorghum payments. Corn producers who received advance deficiency payments will receive \$0.135 per bushel. Sorghum producers who received advance deficiency payments will receive \$0.21 per bushel.

Under the 0/92 provision of the 1989 feed grains program, participants had the option of underplanting program crop acreage while still earning program payments. Eligible producers are assured of receiving payments which are equal to at least the projected deficiency payment rates of \$0.89 per bushel for corn and \$0.90 per bushel for sorghum. At this time, eligible producers will receive 0/92 payments of \$0.89 per bushel for corn and \$0.90 per bushel for sorghum, less any advance payments. The total amount of these payments is about \$180 million: \$145 million to corn producers and \$35 million to sorghum producers.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

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COTTON MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HOLD FOURTH MEETING

WASHINGTON, March 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the Advisory Committee on Cotton Marketing will hold its fourth meeting Tuesday, March 27, at 8 a.m., in the Doubletree Hotel, 5410 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, Texas. Agenda items include further discussion of the committee's recommendations regarding 100-percent high volume instrument (HVI) classing in 1991, cotton classification user fees for the 1990 crop, and price support loan schedules.

The advisory committee was formed by the secretary of agriculture in February 1988 to obtain advice from a cross-section of the cotton industry on how to improve the nation's cotton marketing system. The committee first met April 13, 1989.

Notice of the meeting will be published in the March 9 Federal Register. For additional information, contact Jesse F. Moore, Director, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2641-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179.

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USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR JANUARY

WASHINGTON, March 7—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for January 1990:

Chart on next page.

Cost of food at home for a week in January

	-----Food plans-----			
	Thrifty	Low-cost (In Dollars)	Moderate cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	47.30	59.80	73.80	92.00
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	44.80	57.60	71.10	85.00
Family of 4 with preschool children	68.80	86.10	105.20	129.30
Family of 4 with elemen- tary schoolchildren	78.70	101.00	126.20	152.20
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	12.40	15.20	17.70	21.40
3-5 years	13.40	16.50	20.40	24.30
6-8 years	16.30	21.80	27.20	31.80
9-11 years	19.40	24.80	31.90	36.80
Females:				
12-19 years	20.30	24.40	29.60	35.80
20-50 years	20.50	25.50	31.00	39.90
51 and over	20.30	24.90	30.80	36.70
Males:				
12-14 years	20.30	28.10	35.00	41.10
15-19 years	21.00	29.00	36.10	41.80
20-50 years	22.50	28.90	36.10	43.70
51 and over	20.40	27.50	33.80	40.60

USDA’s Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Dr. James T. Heimbach, acting administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that provide wellbalanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Heimbach said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” he said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family’s food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in fourperson families. If your family has more or less than four, total the “individual” figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a fiveor six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617

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USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON IMPORTING HONEY BEES FROM NEW ZEALAND

WASHINGTON, March 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended the comment period on a proposal to relax certain import restrictions on honey bees and honey bee semen from New Zealand.

“Honey bee regulations help protect the U.S. bee industry from foreign pests and diseases,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “New Zealand is free of, and has adequate defenses against, the types of honey bee diseases, parasites and undesirable species of honey bees, harmful to the U.S. bee industry, so our import restrictions can now be removed.”

USDA has reviewed New Zealand’s bee enforcement activities and the results of its sampling program; APHIS also has exchanged information on honey bee-related issues with New Zealand.

The proposed rules allow for only non-stop shipments of honey bees or honey bee semen, to ensure that the health of the exported insects or products is not compromised.

“APHIS will require that New Zealand certify these shipments as originating in that country,” Glosser said.

Extension of the comment period is in response to requests from the U.S. beekeeping industry for additional time to prepare its response to this proposed rule.

Comments on the original proposal, published in the Feb. 6 Federal Register, will be accepted if they are received on or before April 2. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket no. 89-117 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Rm. 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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USDA LABS ARE HOME TO POTENTIAL FUTURE SCIENTISTS

WASHINGTON, March 7—Despite the dazzling examples of millionaire teenage tennis champs and adolescent rock stars, some 2,000 high school students in the past 10 years still have opted for the rigors of agricultural research.

That research is performed at U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratories across the country. It's one way USDA's Agricultural Research Service is working to combat the nation's potential shortfall of scientists.

"If we're lucky, that experience may kindle a desire in at least a few to pursue a career with us," said Jane Giles, ARS personnel director.

Giles said the research agency takes in approximately 200 students a year nationwide in its Research Apprenticeship program—one of 10 opportunities for high school and college students as well as high school teachers.

For example, at the Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, La., college student Nikola Lockett works with scientists on a project to improve cotton fiber quality.

By now, Lockett is an "old hand" around the lab—working there since her junior year in high school. She is a pharmacy major in college, but says the lab work has helped her realize "research is where I want to be."

The experiences of Lockett and others in the ARS programs could fill a frightening potential gap in this country's scientific expertise, according to Giles.

"Over the last year, fewer American students seem motivated to pursue careers in science and engineering," Giles said. "At the same time, demand for people in these professions is on the upswing."

She added, "We're concerned enough about the decreasing student interest in science and engineering that we're continually looking for ways to spark the interest of young people."

Giles said ARS laboratories involve teachers in research each year. For example, eighth-grade science teacher Steve Pierce of Weslaco, Texas, helped survey south Texas' wild honey bee population in the summer as a participant in ARS' Teachers' Research Fellowship Program, while Traci Higgins, an eighth-grade science teacher at Lubbock, Texas, learned how to measure the cellular responses of plants to stress.

Other student experiences include:

* A Georgia high school senior who spent the summer learning advanced cell culture techniques and running her own research project.

* Philadelphia inner-city teens who learned about the chemical engineering involved in production of the food they eat, from snacks to basics.

* Students in Pendleton, Ore., who ran their own soil fertility experiments in conjunction with an ARS lab to learn about the structure and richness of the region's soils.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

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USDA SEEKS NOMINATORS TO BEEF BOARD

WASHINGTON, March 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today it is accepting applications from organizations wishing to be certified as eligible to nominate cattle producers or beef importers for appointment to vacant positions on the national Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

Organizations not previously certified and wishing to be considered as eligible to nominate producers or importers to the board may apply to USDA for certification. Certified nominators need not re-apply, said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

The 113-member Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board was established by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, and members were appointed by the secretary of agriculture to develop and administer a coordinated program of beef promotion and research to strengthen the position of beef in the marketplace.

Under the act, producer representation on the board is based on the number of cattle in each state, with importer representation based on the volume of beef imported. States producing too few cattle to be represented alone are grouped into units for the purpose of allocating board positions.

Vacancies to occur this year in individual states and groups of states are: five members from Texas; two members each from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma; one member each from Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, New York, North

Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, the Northwest unit (Alaska, Hawaii, Washington); and two members representing importers.

Haley said this vacancy list could be shortened if a proposal published in the Feb. 23 Federal Register becomes a final rule. The proposal would adjust representation on the beef board to reflect changes in cattle inventories and cattle and beef imports. Adoption of the proposal would eliminate board vacancies in 1990 for Indiana, Oregon and Tennessee; and Nebraska would have only one vacancy for 1990. The importer unit, on the other hand, would have an additional vacancy for a total of three.

The national program is financed by a mandatory assessment of \$1 per head of cattle sold in the United States and an equivalent amount on imported cattle and beef.

Send applications by April 9 to Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs and Procurement Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Room 2610-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-2650.

Notice of the request for applicants for certification will be published in the March 8 Federal Register. Copies are available from Tapp.

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